

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 SP-03 DOTE-00 EB-11 L-03 COME-00

OIC-04 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SS-20 NSC-07

DRC-01 /095 W

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P 052132Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7166

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUENOS AIRES 4940

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, OAS, PARCA, VE, AR

SUBJECT: FUTURE US MEMBERSHIP IN PAN AMERICAN RAILWAY CONGRESS
ASSOCIATION (PARCA)

REF: A. BA 4537 NOTAL; B. STATE 111293 NOTAL

SUMMARY. PARCA PERMANENT COMMISSION MET JUNE 25 IN COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED ATMOSPHERE OF OPTIMISM RE PROSPECTS FOR NEXT CONGRESS. MEETING INITIALLY CALLED TO ADVISE MEMBERS OF US INTENTION TO WITHDRAW FROM ORANIZATION BUT CONCENTRATED INSTEAD ON WHAT COMMISSION SEES AS SERIOUS INTEREST BY VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT TO HOST CONGRESS. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT DELAY INITIATING FORMAL WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30 TO PROVIDE PARCA REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN DEFINITE RESPONSE FROM GOV. END SUMMARY

1. PERMANENT COMMISSION OF PARCA HAD CONSIDERED VENEZUELA, ECUADOR AND ARGENTINA AS POSSIBLE SITES FOR LONG OVERDUE XIII CONGRESS, NOT HELD TO DATE DUE TO UNWILLINGNESS OF ANY MEMBER GOVERNMENT TO ACT AS HOST. LOCAL RESIDENT REPRESENTING VENEZUELAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PARCA PROPOSED TO VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR HERE IN MARCH THAT GOV HOST CONGRESS, BUT RECEIVED ONLY LUKEWARM RESPONSE. PARCA REPRESENTATIVES
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SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED ON NEWLY ARRIVED VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR

ERNESTO SANTANDER JUNE 19 TO PRESENT COPY OF SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ON VENEZUELAN RAILROADS FROM PARCA'S BIMONTHLY BULLETIN. WHEN QUESTION OF NEXT CONGRESS RAISED, SANTANDER EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST IN HOLDING IT IN CARACAS AND REQUESTED OFFICIAL PROPOSAL TO PRESENT TO GOV.

2. COMMISSION MET JUNE 25 IN MEETING ORIGINALLY CALLED BY PRESIDENT TO ADVISE MEMBERS OF EXPECTED US WITHDRAWAL (REF A). DISCUSSIONS CENTERED INSTEAD ON VENEZUELAN INTEREST IN HOSTING CONGRESS, AND COMMISSION AGREED PRESENT FORMAL PROPOSAL TO GOV. (NOTE TO THIS EFFECT GIVEN AMB SANTANDER JUNE 27.) AS THIS MOST POSITIVE SIGN OF INTEREST IN PARCA CONGRESS BY ANY MEMBER GOVERNMENT IN RECENT YEARS, AND AS US MAINTAINS THAT FAILURE TO HOLD CONGRESS IS PRIMARY REASON FOR PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL, US ACTING REP AGREED TO REQUEST DELAY IN INITIATION USG WITHDRAWAL ACTION.

3. CONTRIBUTING TO COMMISSION'S OPTIMISM IS LETTER RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM GENERAL MANAGER VENEZUELAN STATE RAILROAD ROBERTO AGOSTINI STATING GOV INTENTION SEND DELEGATION TO FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY CONGRESS ASSOCIATION MEETING IN BOLOGNA TO PRESENT PAPER ON VENEZUELA'S NEW RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT POLICY. COMMISSION MEMBERS BELIEVE VENEZUELA, WHICH NOW HAS LEAST DEVELOPED RAILROAD SYSTEM IN LATIN AMERICA, IS READY FOR MAJOR RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM USING OIL REVENUES TO OPEN UP INTERIOR REGIONS. THEY SEE PARCA CONGRESS AS CONTRIBUTING TO INITIATION SUCH A PROGRAM, AND THEREFORE OF DIRECT INTEREST TO GOV.

4. VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR'S EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN HOSTING CONGRESS, WHILE ADMITTEDLY VERY TENTATIVE, REPRESENTS MOST POSITIVE INDICATION PARCA HAS RECEIVED FROM ANY QUARTER OVER LAST FEW YEARS AND HAS BROUGHT ABOUT, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, COMPLETE CHANGE IN COMMISSION MEMBERS OUTLOOK. THEY BASICALLY ACCEPT US POSITION THAT FAILURE TO HOLD CONGRESSES AT REASONABLE INTERVALS REMOVES BASIS FOR ORGANIZATION'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE, AND THEREFORE WERE RESIGNED TO US WITHDRAWAL AND EVENTUAL DISSOLUTION OF PARCA, GIVEN PREVIOUS ABSENCE OF PROSPECTS FOR NEXT CONGRESS. VENEZUELAN INTEREST NOW APPEARS OFFER ON PAST CHANCE, AND US INITIATION OF WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES JULY 15 AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED PER REF B LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD SEEM TO IGNORE WHAT COMMISSION SEES AS ONLY REAL OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD CONGRESS.

5. EMBASSY THEREFORE RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT DELAY INITIATION OF WITHDRAWAL TO SEP 30 TO ALLOW REASONABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR GOV TO RESPOND TO PARCA PROPOSAL. IF POSITIVE RESPONSE NOT RECEIVED BY THEN, WE WOULD EXPECT USG TO COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL BY END OF CY74. PARCA'S STATUTES PROVIDE THAT WITHDRAWAL

EFFECTED BY PRESENTATION OF WRITTEN NOTICE, WITH NO MINIMUM
GRACE PERIOD REQUIRED. RE CY75 CONTRIBUTION, SUGGEST IT BE
BUDGETED WITH UNDERSTANDING BY ALL CONCERNED THAT US MEMBERSHIP
WOULD CONTINUE, AND THUS CY75 CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE MADE, ONLY
IF CONGRESS ACTUALLY SCHEDULED BEFORE END OF CY75. REPLY
REQUESTED TO ABOVE SOONEST TO ENABLE EMBASSY ADVISE PARCA.

6. FOR CARACAS. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE
RE PROSPECTS FOR MAJOR RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND/OR
GOV SPONSORSHIP OF PARCA CONGRESS. AIRPOUCHING YOU
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARCA. DECON 7/5/75.
HILL

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